

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SSM-03 DHA-02 /075 W
-----130329Z 087621 /70

R 121328Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6119
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 3363

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: IS, XF, EG, PDEV, PFOR
SUBJECT: MAYOR SHAWWA'S TRIUMPHAL TOUR

REF:TEL AVIV 2922

SUMMARY: GAZA MAYOR IS OPTIMISTIC THAT SAUDIS WILL BE
GENEROUS WITH FIVE-YEAR AID REQUEST, BELIEVES ISRAELIS
WILL COOPERATE, SEES THE PLO AS CRUMBLING. GAZA CITY
MANAGER (MAYOR'S NEPHEW) ADDS THAT MAYOR MET PLO FIGURES
IN DAMASCUS AND BEIRUT DURING RECENT TOUR, WILL VISIT
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CAIRO SOON, AND WAS TOLD BY AUDI PRINCE FAHD NOT TO
GIVE ISRAELIS ANY PRETEXT FOR MOVES DURING CURRENT
PERIOD OF SAUDI-U.S. COOPERATION. END SUMMARY

1. FUND-RAISING. GAZA MAYOR RASHED SHAWWA REVIEWED
HIS RECENT FUND-RAISING TRIP FOR EMBOFF ON MAY 11,
SAYING THAT IT HAD BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL. IN DDITION

TO A TWO-MILLION DOLLAR CHECK FROM SHEIKH ZAYED (REFTEL), HE HAD COLLECTED SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND DINARS FROM GAZA CITIZENS IN SAUDI ARABIA. MORE IMPORTANT HAD BEEN THE SAUDI RESPONSE TO HIS REQUEST FOR NEARLY ONE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS OVER A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD. SHAWWA HAD MET WITH PRINCE FAHD, WITH THE GOVERNOR AND MUNICIPAL HEAD OF RIYADH, AND WITH THE MINISTER OF MUNICIPALITIES; ALL HAD BEEN VERY FRIENDLY AND GAVE THE MAYOR REASON TO EXPECT LARGE SUPPORT. THE MAYOR SAID HE EXPECTS TO RECEIVE AT LEAST HALF HIS TOTAL REQUEST AND HOPES FOR A GREAT DEAL MORE.

2. ISRAELI REACTION. ASKED ABOUT ISRAELI REACTION TO HIS TOUR, THE MAYOR SAID THAT THEY ARE MAINLY CONCERNED TO MAKE SURE THAT THE MONEY IS NOT FROM PLO SOURCES, "WHICH IS NOT THE CASE. THE PLO DOESN'T HAVE THE MONEY TO SUPPORT MUNICIPALITIES." THE ISRAELIS HAD PERMITTED THE MAYOR TO GO LOOK FOR FUNDS AND HE DID NOT DOUBT THAT THEY WOULD PERMIT HIM TO ACCEPT THEM. SHAWWA TOLD THE ISRAELI GOVERNOR-GENERAL THAT THE MONEY WILL BE BANKED IN AMMAN AND CONVERTED AT THE BLACK MARKET RATE. "I TOLD THEM IT WAS NOT FAIR THAT THE WEST BANK CAN LEGALLY BRING IN JORDANIAN DINARS, BUT OUR ONLY CURRENCY IS THE ISRAELI POUND. I TOLD THEM THAT UNLESS THEY AGREE, I WON'T BRING IN A SINGLE DOLLAR." THE ISRAELIS HAVE TAKEN THIS MATTER UNDER ADVISEMENT, AND THE MAYOR ANTICIPATES THAT THEY WILL AGREE.
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3. OTHER TOWNS IN THE GAZA STRIP. EMBOFF ASKED WHETHER THE SAUDIS MEANT FOR THE MAYOR TO SHARE HIS AID WITH THE OTHER MUNICIPALITIES IN THE GAZA STRIP. THE ISRAELIS ASKED THE SAME QUESTION, SAID THE MAYOR THEY ASKED WHAT ABOUT DEIR AL-BALAH AND RAFAH. THE MAYOR HAD RESPONDED THAT IF THE OTHER TOWNS WERE UNABLE TO GET MONEY THEMSELVES, OF COURSE HE WOULD SHARE HIS PORTION, "EVEN IF THE MAYORS OF DEIR AL-BALAH AND RAFAH ARE ISRAELI PUPPETS. AFTER ALL, THE MONEY IS FOR HELPING THE PEOPLE, NOT FOR THE PUPPETS."

4. PLO "CRUMBLING".. THE MAYOR HAD TOLD THE ISRAELIS THAT DURING HIS TRIP, HE COORDINATED WITH PLO REPRESENTATIVES. "BUT THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THE ARAB STATES HAVE DECIDED TO HELP THE PEOPLE IN THE OCCUPIED LANDS; THEY NO LONGER BELIEVE THAT THE PLO IS THE ONLY FORCE CARRYING ON THE FIGHT AGAINST THE

ISRAELIS. WHAT IS HAPPENING INSIDE IS MORE IMPORTANT

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-----130334Z 087555 /70

R 121328Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 3363

THAN WHAT IS HAPPENING OUTSIDE." EMBOFF ASKED
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE OIL STATES IN FACT GIVE
LARGE SUMS TO THE MUNICIPALITIES OVER A PERIOD OF
YEARS AND PERHAPS GRADUALLY REDUCE THEIR ASSISTANCE
TO THE PLO. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE PLO IF SOMEHOW
A PEACE SETTLEMENT COULD BE WORKED OUT? THE MAYOR:
"MY OPINION IS THAT THE PLO IS CRUMBLING. I MET
A LOT OF THEM DURING MY TRIP, AND SOME OF THEM
SEEMED TO BE LOOKING FOR OTHER THINGS TO DO."

5. GAZA CITY MANAGER ISAM SHAWWA, WHO JOINED THE
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MEETING HALFWAY, TALKED WITH EMBOFF PRIVATELY AFTER THE MAYOR AND EMBOFF CONCLUDED THEIR CONVERSATION. HE ADDED THE FOLLOWING DETAILS.

6. SHAWWA-PLO RELATIONS IMPROVED. MAYOR SHAWWA HAD ALSO VISITED DAMASCUS AND BEIRUT ON HIS TOUR (AS EMBOFF UNDERSTOOD IT, FOR A PERIOD OF THREE DAYS BETWEEN HIS UAE AND SAUDI ARABIA STOPS), WHERE HE MET WITH MANY PLO FIGURES "FROM A TO Z," BUT EXCLUDING ARAFAT, WHO WAS IN SOUTH LEBANON AT THE TIME. (ISAM NAMED KHALID AL-HASAN AND ZUHAYR MOHSIN.) THE MAYOR HAD EXPLAINED TO THE PLO THE REALITIES OF LIFE UNDER THE ISRAELIS, HAD JUSTIFIED HIS PERSONAL TIES WITH KING HUSSEIN ("WHICH HAVE ENABLED THE PEOPLE OF GAZA TO REMAIN IN THEIR LAND"), AND HAD IMPROVED HIS PERSONAL STANDING. KHALID AL-HASAN TOLD SHAWWA THAT "THE ICE HAS MELTED" BETWEEN US, AND ORDERS HAVE BEEN PASSED THAT THE VOICE OF PALESTINE IN CAIRO WILL NO LONGER ATTACK HAJJ RASHED SHAWWA (IN FACT, A SHAWWA CLAN MEMBERS HAS ALREADY GONE TO CAIRO TO WORK WITH THE VOP), NOR WILL AL FAJR (ARABIC NEWSPAPER IN JERUSALEM) MAKE ANY FURTHER PERSONAL ATTACKS ON THE MAYOR. ISAM SAID THAT THE MAYOR HAD NOT HIDDEN THESE CONTACTS FROM THE ISRAELIS, AND HAD EXPLAINED THEM STRAIGHT-FORWARDLY.

7. MAYOR TO VISIT CAIRO. ISAM STATED (COMMENT: AGAIN--SEE TEL AVIV 2299) THAT THE MAYOR WILL BE GOING TO CAIRO SHORTLY, "AN INVITATION IS EXPECTED IN THE NEAR FUTURE." THE MAYOR HAD SPOKEN ABOUT THIS WITH THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR IN AMMAN SEVERAL TIMES DURING THIS MOST RECENT TOUR. WHEN EMBOFF ASKED WHETHER FAHMY KNEW OF THE MAYOR'S TRIP, ISAM SAID IT WAS BEING HANDLED BY SADAT PERSONALLY. THE ISRAELIS ARE ALSO AWARE OF THE CAIRO TRIP ("THE CONFIDENTIAL

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ASSISTANT TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL HAD TOLD THE MAYOR MONTHS AGO--"JUST DON'T GO DURING THE PNC"). NOR DID KING HUSSEIN OBJECT TO THE MAYOR'S GOING TO CAIRO. "TO THE CONTRARY, EVER SINCE SADAT TOLD THE GAZA LEFTISTS 'IF YOU WANT A SOLUTION, GO TALK TO HUSSEIN' (PARA 3, TEL AVIV 1515), THE KING HAS ENCOURAGED THE MAYOR TO HELP IN UNTYING THE LAST KNOT" (BETWEEN JORDAN AND EGYPT).

8. PRINCE FAHD URGES CAUTION ON MAYOR. ISAM ALSO OFFERED, ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT SURE THE MAYOR WOULD WANT HIM TO TELL EMBOFF ("BUT I KNOW I WON'T BE QUOTED") A TIDBIT FROM A PRIVATE CONVERSATION BETWEEN SAUDI PRINCE FAHD AND MAYOR SHAWWA. FAHD HAD TOLD THE MAYOR TO BE CAUTIOUS IN HIS DEALINGS WITH THE ISRAELIS, NOT CRITICISE THEM TOO MUCH, AND NOT OFFER THEM A PRETEXT FOR TAKING DRASTIC MOVES IN THE OCCUPIED LANDS, "BECAUSE THE US AND SAUDI ARABIA, THE ONLY TWO COUNTRIES THAT HAVE A REAL SAY IN THE MATTER, ARE IN AGREEMENT AND ARE WORKING ON A SETTLEMENT," FAHD SAID.

9. COMMENT: ALL THE ABOVE ADDS UP TO AN IMPRESSIVE TRIP BY THE MAYOR AND TO MANY SIGNS THAT THE ARABS ARE MAKING EFFORTS TO COORDINATE THEIR EFFORTS WITHIN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. IF THE SHAWWAS CAN AFTER MANY YEARS GET MONEY FROM THE ARABS FOR THE FIRST TIME; IF THE SHAWWAS AND THE PLO CAN HID THE OUTWARD SIGNS OF THEIR LONGSTANDING ENMITY; IF EGYPT AND JORDAN CAN AGREE THAT THE MAYOR OF GAZA SHOULD VISIT CAIRO; AND IF ALL THIS CAN HAPPEN WITH ISRAELI ACQUIESCENCE--THEN TRUTH INDEED IS STRANGER THAN FICTION.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GAZA, MILITARY OCCUPIED AREAS, MUNICIPALITY, URBAN DEVELOPMENT, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TELAV03363
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770168-0649
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770564/aaaacdem.tel
Line Count: 249
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7e8d3895-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 TEL AVIV 2922
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2545179
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAYOR SHAWWA'S TRIUMPHAL TOUR
TAGS: PDEV, PFOR, IS, XF, EG, (SHAWWA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7e8d3895-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009